

# Ag-knowledge

a newsletter for Alberta Agriculture staff

Alberta  
AGRICULTURE

June, 1985

## Alberta Women's Week - a 55-year-old tradition continues

For over 50 years, women from across Alberta have been making the trek to the University of Alberta for a week of learning, fellowship and relaxation.

This year will be no exception - up to 400 women are expected to attend Alberta Women's Week, July 22 to 25.

Women who have attended Alberta Women's Week in the past have been enthusiastic about the atmosphere, the sessions, the food and the very well organized program.

That organization and smooth operation doesn't just happen - it results from a lot of hard work and careful planning done by members of the home economics branch.

Gail Lemke, our DHE in Stony Plain, is the chairman of this year's Alberta Women's Week (AWW) organizing committee. She has seven other staff members from the home economics branch to assist her as well as a representative from Women of the Farm and Alberta Women's Institutes.

The committee has been working since last September to put together this year's program. And for some committee members, this year's contribution represents only a portion of their eventual commitment to AWW. Traditionally, the co-chairman of women's program becomes the chairman of women's program the next year and the chairman of the entire committee the third year.

"This arrangement provides for continuity," Gail explains. Although it also means a lot of hard work, the rewards are worth it. Gail says of her first year's involvement with AWW, "It was the highlight of my work with Alberta Agriculture to that time."

With that kind of enthusiasm going into the organization of AWW, it's not surprising the week-long event has been a hit for so long.

The first Farm Women's Rest Week (as it was then known) was held in July of 1930. It came about because of the efforts of Isobel Townsend, a farm wife who first visited the Olds School of Agriculture in 1929 and was impressed with its spacious buildings and beautiful grounds. What, she thought, a perfect place this would be for farm women to come for a holiday from the farm. She wrote the then minister of agriculture with her suggestion; he thought it an excellent idea and within a year her idea became a reality.

Through the 50-plus years of AWW's history, the topics covered have stayed current with the times. The 1930 program, for example, offered sessions

in the care of baby chicks; in 1984 there was a session on how to use a home computer. Though the topics have varied through the years, the aim has remained constant to provide Alberta women with an opportunity to develop their knowledge, attitudes and skills for daily living and adjustment to change.

This year's theme is "The Best Possible You". The program will include sessions on drying food, farm and home management, fitness, diet, safety, and child-parent relationships, to mention only a few of the topics covered in the 12 different select-a-sessions that participants can choose to attend. The majority of the sessions are given by staff members of the home economics branch or other branches in our department - DHEs, specialists, economists, to name a few.

The next few weeks will be especially busy for some of our staff members as they put the final touches on the plans for Alberta Women's Week. If past history is any indicator, those carefully laid plans will result in an educational and enjoyable week for about 400 Alberta women. □



Three women who attended Alberta Women's Week 1984 enjoy the challenge of learning how to operate a home computer.

# question box

**Q:** Why does it cost the same, (\$4 per month) to park in the outdoor parking lot as it does to park in the underground parking area when the underground location is obviously better?

**Charles McFarlan, head of the new administration branch,** replies:

Parking rates are set by the parking administration of Public Works Supply and Services and are \$3 per month for non-electrified stalls and \$4 for electrified stalls. The latter charge has been extended to underground parking. The charges were set before I was born and have never been changed. I understand, unofficially, that the charges are being reviewed with a view to raising the underground parking rate.

**Is there something you'd like to ask an assistant deputy minister, the deputy minister or the minister?**

Send your question to Ag-knowledge. We'll forward it to the appropriate person for an answer and print both questions and answers in a future edition.

Your name, address and phone number must accompany your question, but the question will be forwarded without your name, and no names will appear in Ag-knowledge.

Address questions to: Ag-knowledge  
c/o Print Media Branch, 7000 - 113  
Street, Edmonton. ☐

## Deputy Minister's Column Alberta's red meat industry

In this column I'd like to bring staff up to date on recent developments involving government and Alberta's red meat industry.

During the 1980s, our red meat sector has had its share of economic difficulty, primarily as a result of high input costs without corresponding increases in market returns. Compounding this situation is the proliferation of subsidy programs in other provinces.

Alberta has for some time campaigned to establish a national, tripartite red meat stabilization plan, in which producers, provincial governments, and the federal government would be equal contributors. Such a program would lessen the impact of severe market downturns; it should also allow Alberta's natural advantages in beef, lamb, and pork production to prevail, by eliminating unreasonable intrusion by governments -- provincial and federal -- in Canada's red meat industry.

However, there has been delay after delay in implementing this plan -- and the Alberta government is tired of waiting.

Our Minister has stated that he expects enabling federal legislation for the plan by the end of June. At time of writing, that leaves only six weeks. Mr. Fjordbotten has also stated that, should the federal government fail to act on the proposed national program, Alberta will have to look at other options to protect its own red meat industry.

A second key issue in red meat production is revision of the method of payment of the Crow benefit.

This benefit is valued at about \$700 million annually; however, its real value to western agriculture depends on how the money is disbursed.

As things stand now, thanks to the previous federal government, the entire Crow benefit is paid to the railways. This means that producers must ship their grain to obtain the benefit -- and consequently, domestic feed grain prices are elevated and Alberta's red meat production continues to be disadvantaged.

Recently, the Inquiry of the Hall Commission into the Method of Payment of the Crow Benefit recommended that the entire benefit be paid directly to farmers. To date, the federal government has not indicated whether it will take any firm action on this fair and logical conclusion.

Our province insists that the federal government follow the recommendations of its own commission. The Hall proposals would remove a major disincentive to livestock production and to secondary (value-added) agricultural development in Alberta.

Of course, both issues will continue to make headlines in the days to come. It's probably too early to make firm predictions, but I'm hopeful that we're finally seeing signs of proper treatment of western agriculture by the federal government. We'll know for sure in the not-too-distant future.

H.B. McEwen ☐

## Mr. Airdrie contest

Every March the town of Airdrie hosts a Mr. Airdrie contest. Since the contest began in 1983, Alberta Agriculture has proved to be a keen competitor, earning the reputation as the one to beat.

In 1983, John Knapp, regional sheep specialist at Airdrie was the lucky winner and in 1984 Rod Chernos, poultry specialist, was first runner-up.

This year, Alberta Agriculture's reputation was upheld thanks to Rich Smith, regional engineer at Airdrie. He was crowned Mr. Airdrie after defeating 11 other entrants.

Here's how the contest works: Airdrie businesses enter by selecting a contestant to represent them. A panel of three judges evaluate the

contestants on the basis of their performance in a bathing suit competition, a talent competition and a one-minute speech on a topic of their choice. The winner receives a trip for two to Las Vegas plus a variety of gifts donated by Airdrie shopowners.

Alberta Agriculture staff showed their enthusiastic support with a display of balloons, banners and pins. They even got together to record their version of Old Mr. Agriculture Had a Farm with Larry Bilben, ADC's assistant regional manager providing the music.

As a further tribute to Rich, the town of Airdrie included his picture along with Ms. Airdrie 1985 in a time capsule containing pictures and newspaper clippings highlighting Airdrie's historical events. The capsule which was buried on May 25 will be dug up in one hundred years. □



Rich Smith models his "bathing suit" which contained a baby pig.

## Television survey results positive

*At the Crossroads*, Alberta Agriculture's one-hour television special, was the subject of a telephone survey conducted by the Heffring Research Group.

The purpose of the survey was to measure how well the special was received by rural audiences. And, according to the results, it was a big success throughout the province.

The survey was conducted March 18, 19 and 20 after the special aired on March 17. Produced by Tom Dodd of the broadcast media branch, the film was a drama of an Alberta farm family faced with crucial business decisions in order to survive.

According to Doug Pettit, branch head, the survey showed that the scenario portrayed in the special was quite typical of today's farm family. "I think that was a big factor in its success," he says.

Of those surveyed, 19 per cent watched the program. This figure varied throughout Alberta ranging from 9 per cent in Region 1 to 29 per cent in Region 6.

Of those who watched the film, 84 per cent found it informative and 95 per cent would like to see more such programming. □

## Keep your cash close

Recently, there have been two incidents in the J.G. O' Donoghue building of wallets and cash being stolen.

So, to prevent this unfortunate event from re-occurring, remember not to leave your wallet or purse out in the open. □

# Staff chaff

## on the move

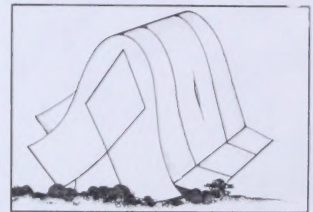
Welcome to the following people who have joined Alberta Agriculture: **Ruby Young**, DHE at Coronation; **Lori Dawes**, clerk typist at Airdrie; **Lorraine Hebert**, clerk typist with market development in Edmonton; **Alfreda Strzelec**, clerk with financial services in Edmonton; and **Anita Marr**, agrologist with production economics in Edmonton. New farming for the future staff are **Robert Pocock**, **George Van Esbroeck**, **Deborah MacPherson**, and **Diane Rae Heald** at Lacombe; **Darryl Nakonechny**, **Brian Roth**, **Michael Mueller**, **Eva Pavlikova**, **Garry Chan**, **Karsten Heltberg**, and **Claire Lukey** at the Lethbridge research station; **Lois Connelly** and **Joan White** at the research station at Beaverlodge; **Laura D'Amico** and **Brenda McIntyre** in Edmonton; and **Bruce Comstock** in Lethbridge. New field crops staff at Lacombe are **Gregory Oro**, **William Stewart**, **Debbie Skramstad**, **John Mitchell**, **Kenneth McGee**, **Donna Lakeman**, **Stanley Hand** and **Carol Goettel**. **Cec Purves**, chairman, Surface Rights Board, **Les Miller**, member, Surface Rights Board. **Blanche Taylor**, clerk typist and **Lorna McFadzen**, lab technician both with the reference lab at Edmonton; **Karen Fantin**, personnel administrator in Edmonton; **Allan Pleshko**, mobile drill operator at Lethbridge; **Curtis Weeks**, DA at Athabasca; **Donna Skoworodko**, clerk typist at Spirit River; **Robert Pederson**, farm safety specialist at Edmonton; **Kenneth Mallet**, agrologist at AHRC at Brooks; **Melvin Hoffer**, veterinarian at the Lethbridge vet lab.

**Transfers:** **Eugene Kurinka**, formerly with Alberta Environment joined Alberta Agriculture in Lethbridge as a mobile drill operator. **Ilidio Cesar** became the shipper/receiver for Alberta Agriculture, moving from the same position with Alberta Public Works Supply and Services. **Robert Riewe** became irrigation management coordinator at Lethbridge, transferring from Strathmore. **Don Sheer** became section head of animal nutrition with the beef cattle and sheep branch; Don was previously livestock supervisor with that branch. **Gerhardt Hartman**, former irrigation systems section head at Lethbridge, became manager with the irrigation secretariat. **Ernest Smith** became loans officer at ADC's Red Deer office; he was the DA at Airdrie. **Shirley Lorimer** became DHE at Valleyview moving from Wetaskiwin; **Don Macyk** became branch head for agri-food development moving from the agricultural processing development branch. **Gordon McNaughton**, former DA at Red Deer, became the provincial coordinator of the financial management initiative program with the farm business management branch at Olds.

The following people have left Alberta Agriculture and we wish them well: **Jane Nemec**, **Henry Martens**, **Elizabeth Webster** (with FTF), **Rudy Warawa**, **John Andrew**, **Sandra Dexter**, **Bonnie Flintoff**, **Tracy Duncan**, **Valerie Martel**, **Don Keith**, **Fred Potrebenco**, **Shirley Ingram**, **Barbara Makarowski**, **Neil Palechek**, **Katherine Irwin**, **Gordon Headrick**, **Toru Maruno**, **Ted Cardwell**, **Blanche Hold**, **Diane Hearn**, **Brenda Bircholz**, **Nigel Davidson**, **Ken McDonnell**, **Jim McDowan**, **Antoni Dudzic**, **Peter Gamache**, **Dorothy Glazer**, **Vera Lee Irvine**, **Adrian Van Biert**, **Lorne Hammond**, **Pat Letendre**, **Arnold Urbonas**, **Candace Myre**, **Frank Straica**, **Karen Miller**, **Keith Brown**, **Warren Barker**, **Raylene Mulligan**, **Lorraine Taylor**, **Helen Sirman**, **Joe Unruh**, **Wilma Kennis**, **Farida Malik**, **Dawn Stillwell**. □

# agri-bits

1. What is Alberta Agriculture's most northerly district office?
2. Who is Greg Huculak?
3. What's the newest made-in-Alberta food product being test-marketed right now?
4. What is headspace?
  - a) What you don't have in an Austin Mini
  - b) the expansion allowance for food canned in a jar
  - c) your frame of mind
5. What is this?



6. When will the new northern branch of the Pulse Growers Association of Alberta (PGAA) be holding its pulse tour?

## Answers below

1. It's at Manning which, incidentally, is about 2166 miles from the North Pole.
2. Greg is an artist who works for the broadcast media branch and other audio-visual graphic art services. His phone number is 427-2127.
3. White Blossom Berry Farms saskatoon jelly. It's on the shelves of 40 Safeway stores and selected Peace Country outlets. Len Paulovich, a farmer, entrepreneur and small fruit grower from Manning is the major force behind it.
4. b. Headspace ensures that when hot food expands, it doesn't touch the lid possibly breaking the seal.
5. It's a hotcap, a translucent paper cap reinforced with wire that acts like a small greenhouse. Transplants that are hotcapped can be set outdoors in early May despite frost because it provides two or three degrees of frost protection.
6. The tour of plots in the Mortville area is scheduled for August 8th. For more information contact Blair Roth at 581-5127.



